**BEAVER COUNTY FASTPITCH LEAGUE**

***BCFPL Playing Rules - Approved for 2023***

The BCFPL Playing rules supersede the USA SOFTBALL Code. Anything not defined in the BCFPL Playing Rules will default to the USA Softball Code. There will be six divisions: Varsity, Junior Varsity, 12U, 10U, 8U and 6U.

BCFPL is a recreational fastpitch league and will have the authority to determine who will umpire our games. Due to the current umpire shortage in our area, volunteers are able to umpire games if agreed upon between coaches. We will not be bound to a specific umpiring crew with the understanding of USA Softball hosted insurance coverage is nullified in games not officiated by USA Softball certified umpires. If a contract is required by USA Softball officiating crew, this contract will have a term that is agreed to by the district representatives.

***ELIGIBLE PLAYERS (All Divisions)***

1. A player may only be rostered on one team regardless of age group.
2. The guidance for our Varsity and Junior Varsity divisions are as follows. Varsity players are in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade at the start of the season. Junior Varsity players are in 7th, 8th, and 9th grade at the start of the season. 7th graders who are age eligible can play at 12U. 9th graders can play at the Varsity level. Player eligibility is governed by the district representatives.
3. A call-up player is defined as a player from a younger division filling a roster on an older division team when regular players are missing. A team is allowed a maximum of 3 players and these players are not permitted to start over rostered players.
4. A player rostered in their age eligible division can be a call-up player for the older divisions, but are not eligible in younger divisions. (can play up, not down)
5. Call-up players must be identified on the lineup cards given to the umpires and opposing teams at the pre-game conference. Call-up players can be used to fill absent defensive players and must be placed at the end of the batting order. Call-up players can be used as substitutes (courtesy runners, a single at bat, one inning defense), but shouldn’t be used unfairly over the team’s rostered players.
6. Players from other teams in the same division cannot be used as call-up players.
7. A player without an age eligible team in her district has the option to play on an age eligible team in another district, but an approval must be granted by the BCFPL Board. To be eligible to request to play with another district, players MUST register with their home district with the intent to play for them.
8. Players are not eligible until a roster is submitted to the BCFPL Commissioners prior to the first scheduled game. If rosters are not submitted prior to the first game, teams will forfeit their games until the roster is submitted. Rosters can be submitted to BeaverCountyFastpitch@gmail.com.

***GENERAL EQUIPMENT RULES (All Divisions)***

1. The home team will provide one new and one used ball. Both teams will assist in chasing foul balls.
2. A game used ball must be USA Softball approved (USA/ASA stamp) with a .47 COR/375 compression.
3. Catchers must wear helmet with facemask and throat protector or a hockey style mask, chest protector, and shin guards.
4. Infield face masks and heart guards are strongly encouraged in this league, but USA Softball code will be used for infield equipment rules.
5. Bats must be ASA/USA Softball certified and cannot be damaged in any way. This is under the umpire’s discretion.

***GAME CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING (10U,12U,JV,Varsity)***

1. *No games will be canceled due to player availability.* Call-ups are an option and must be used in order to keep the schedule. (refer to ELIGIBLE PLAYERS sections C,D,E,F)
2. Acceptable cancellations include inclement weather and/or if the facility owner does not permit games played.
3. Home teams will be responsible to discuss with the opposing team on a reschedule date. Games must be rescheduled within 72 hours (not played, just scheduled).
4. It is the league’s expectation that coaches do everything within reason to avoid forfeits.
5. Required steps to cancel games as soon as possible to avoid additional umpire fees:
	1. Inclement weather cancellations must be done not later than 1 hour prior to game start. If the game is started during rain or with the certainty of rain, the coaches will be subject to additional umpire fees (no more than ⅓ of regulation fees) if the game is not officially completed.
	2. Contact the **Head of Umpires** to notify them that the game will not be played as scheduled.

 \*It is suggested to document the time and method of the **Head of Umpire** notification.

* 1. Contact the opposing team coach to notify them of the cancellation.
	2. Contact your team to notify them of the cancellation.
1. Required steps to reschedule games as soon as possible:
	1. Games must be rescheduled (not necessarily played) within 72 hours.
	2. Three different dates must be presented to the opposing team and a new date is agreed upon.
	3. Playing on opposing fields is an option, but must be agreed upon by the home team.
	4. Contact **Head of Umpires** to provide the details of the rescheduled game.
	5. Notify the opposing coach and your team after the date is confirmed with the **Head of Umpires**.
	6. If a coach is not cooperating with a rescheduled game, please notify your district representatives.
	7. The board will have the option to approve a forfeit of a game if deemed necessary.

If the coaches fail to follow these steps, they will be subject to additional umpire fees for unneeded travel expenses and umpire inconvenience due to poor or untimely communication (no more than ⅓ of regulation fees).

If umpires fail to show at a scheduled game, please contact the BCFPL Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner as soon as possible. Missed games will be addressed with the **Head of Umpires**.

***UMPIRE FEEDBACK***

1. Please submit all umpire feedback to the BCFPL Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner using email. Contact your district representative if you need contact information.
2. We encourage both positive and negative feedback.
3. Purpose of this is to help us improve and/or enforce expected knowledge of our league rules and the play of the game. Please report all issues including misunderstanding of rules, feedback of umpires handling of games, and any other potential topic.
4. All feedback (positive and negative) will be collected and reviewed by the BCFPL Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner and presented to the Head of Umpires.

***GENERAL GAMES (All Divisions)***

TIME LIMITS
All divisions will play 1 hour 40 minutes in length, finish the inning. Games that are suspended due to the umpire’s discretion for darkness, weather, field conditions, etc., will be an official game if played 5 full innings, 4-1/2 innings if the home team is leading, or after 1 hour.

1. NO new innings will start after 1 hour and 40 Minutes, under the umpire’s discretion.
2. There will be a 2 hour drop dead time limit. If the away team is at bat, the score will revert back to the last completed inning. If the home team is at bat, the score is final if the game is tied or the home team claims the lead.
3. Games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped. The home team is the official book of record.
4. Mercy rules for all age groups are: 12 runs after 4 innings and 8 runs after 5 innings.
5. Tie games after 7 innings and still within the 1 hour 40 minute time limit, an 8th inning will be completed using the USA Softball International Tiebreaker rule. If the score is still tied after the completion of the 8th inning, the game will be considered a tie.

PRE-GAME

1. Coaches from both teams and the umpire are to review all field and playing rules to clarify any questions prior to the start of every game. (Keep a copy of rules with you)
2. Line-up cards are not required, but both teams must keep their scorebook.
3. Infield and outfield warm up balls only permitted before the 1st inning. No balls permitted in between innings. Pitchers are only permitted to throw 5 warmup pitches in between innings, 5th pitch can be thrown to 2B by the catcher.
4. Only 4 coaches, including scorekeeper, are allowed in the dugout and warm up area.
5. Batting a full roster is permitted, but extra batters must bat the entire game or take an out in their spot as per USA SOFTBALL short-handed rule. Exception: If an injury occurs to any of the players, an out will not be taken unless the total number of players is less than 9.
6. Free defensive substitution is allowed when batting the entire roster.
7. Courtesy runners are encouraged for the catchers to help give them the extra time to get their gear on.

POST-GAME

1. Standings will be kept using Wins, head to head, Runs Against.
2. Rainouts must be rescheduled within 48 hours. If the home team attempts to reschedule a game by giving the visiting team at least 3 valid dates in which the visiting team does not already have a scheduled game, the home team is awarded the Win. If the home team does not attempt to reschedule within 48 hours, the away team is awarded the win.
3. Evidence of the attempts or lack of attempts will be presented to the involved team’s District Commissioners/Presidents and a decision will be made with the BCFPL Commissioners.
4. Please email your District’s President/Commissioner all comments concerning the umpires including compliments, suggestions, or complaints. Please include the game date, time, location, and the name of the umpire.

SPORTSMANSHIP & EJECTIONS

1. All players, coaches, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Any conduct unbecoming or abusive shall at a minimum be reprimanded with a warning. If warranted, the offending party shall be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpires in charge.
2. Any player, coach, or spectator participating in a fight or altercation shall be immediately ejected from the game and may be disbarred/suspended from the league.
3. Any player, coach, or spectator ejected from a game shall immediately remove themselves from the vicinity of the playing field and/or stands for the remainder of the game. Additional penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the league commissioner and its board members.

***SUPPLEMENT LEAGUE RULES FOR Varsity and Junior Varsity***

GAME RULES

1. USA Softball Code will be used.

***SUPPLEMENT LEAGUE RULES FOR 12U***

GAME RULES

1. Half innings will be over when three (3) outs are made or the batting team scores five (5) runs (whichever occurs first).
2. Games will be complete when the Mercy Rule is in effect (even in the middle of the inning). Innings will be played even if the run max does not enable a tie. If the home team is up by 7, the away team will still get their chance to bat.

PITCHING RULES

1. 12U pitching distance will be 40 FT.

***SUPPLEMENT LEAGUE RULES FOR 10U***

GAME RULES

1. Use of an 11-inch softball and an ASA approved softball bat is required.
2. Games are 6 innings in 10U.
3. Half innings will be over when three (3) outs are made or the batting team scores five (5) runs (whichever occurs first).
4. Games will be complete when the Mercy Rule is in effect (even in the middle of the inning). Innings will be played even if the run max does not enable a tie. If the home team is up by 7, the away team will still get their chance to bat.
5. There is no dropped 3rd strike rule in 10U.
6. No INFIELD fly rule in 10U.
7. 10 fielders are required to play a game. Teams are permitted to start the game with 9 players, but no players are able to sit on the bench unless there is an injury. If a 10th player shows up after the start of the game, they can be inserted into the lineup at the 10th spot.
8. Coaches may choose from the following options for batting order: Bat 10, bat 9 with a DP/Flex, or bat entire roster

BASERUNNING RULES

1. Runners can only steal 1 base per pitch.
2. 2nd base can only be stolen when there are two outs.
3. There is no stealing home. The runner must be batted in. If the runner is going from second base on a steal to third base and there is an overthrow on the runner going to third, then the runner **cannot advance home**. However, if a runner is positioned at third base and there is an attempt to throw that runner out at third and it is an overthrow, **the runner can advance home.**

PLAYER PITCHING RULES

1. 10U pitching distance will be 35 feet.
2. Illegal pitches will not be called against the rostered pitcher. Pitchers will be handled in an instructive teaching manner and the game can be stopped for proper instruction.
3. Each team must pitch a minimum of 2 girls per game. In the first 4 innings of the game, at least 2 girls must each pitch 2 innings in any combination. After 4 complete innings, **any** pitcher can finish the game.
4. Girls who pitched previously will be able to pitch later in the game.
5. Girls can only pitch a maximum of 3 completed innings per game.
6. If games go into extra innings, innings pitched will reset to zero and refer to PLAYER PITCHING RULES C.

COACH PITCHING RULES

1. Coach pitch at 10U level occurs after the count of 4 balls from the defensive team, coach pitching from the mound is pursued by the offensive team using the existing STRIKE count on the batter. At this time, the offensive coach pitches using the existing STRIKE count from the pitching rubber. The player that is the pitcher must remain behind the rubber with both feet INSIDE the pitching circle.
2. The Coach will permitted to throw up to 4 pitches unless the 4th pitch is a hit foul ball then the count will continue until a strike or no swing out occurs. The player is out if she allows the 4th (or final) pitch to pass without swinging.
3. Umpire is to continue to call strikes, when applicable, when Coach is pitching.
4. Coaches who are pitching must pitch fast and flat, much like a regular fastpitch softball pitcher would throw. The coach does not have to do a windmill windup when pitching to the girls. *Umpires will issue a warning to coaches pitching with an arc and can call subsequent illegal pitches strikes.*

***ILLEGAL PITCHES ONLY APPLY TO THE COACH PITCHING.***

1. A player struck by a pitch by her coach is not awarded first base.
2. If the pitching coach is hit by a batted ball the ball is live. Exception is if umpire rules it intentional. If intentional, then the ball is dead, interference is called, batter is out and all runners must return to last occupied base.
3. Batters may not bunt when a coach is pitching.
4. Slappers may continue to attempt to slap if slapping attempts were made before the 4th ball was pitched.
5. When a ball is hit from a coach pitch, the batter is only allowed a maximum of 2 bases. Runners already on base are allowed as many bases as they can get.
6. There is NO STEALING of a base when Coach is pitching.

***SUPPLEMENT LEAGUE RULES FOR 8U***

GAME RULES

1. Games will be competitive but remain instructional and fun. Coaches should discuss and understand rules prior to the start of the game and work together to be as fair as possible.
2. Use of an 11-inch softball and an ASA approved softball bat is required.
3. Games are 6 innings in 8U.
4. Half innings will be over when three (3) outs are made or the batting team scores five (5) runs (whichever occurs first).
5. No INFIELD fly rule in 8U.
6. On the final batter of an inning, there must be an attempt to record an out when the ball is put into play.
7. A maximum of 10 players will play the field using 4 outfielders. (LF,LC,RC,RF)
8. 8U will not play with a rover.
9. Playing Time – all players must play infield at least 2 innings. As an additional guide, the players should be rotated between positions to provide additional experience and instruction and free substitution on defense is allowed.
10. No intentionally rolling the ball from player to player or to the circle.
11. The player catching is active in the game and retrieves passed balls.
12. Maximum number of defensive coaches in the field of play at any one time is three.
13. Umpires are recommended for 8U games. The base coaches are expected to call fair or foul on their line & outs at their base. Pitching coach will call fly ball catch or no catch, plays at 2nd base and home plate.
14. **There will be no arguing of calls around the players, no exceptions.**
15. Every time a ball is put in play the runner will attempt to get on base and the fielders will attempt to make an out.
16. Score keeping is optional.
17. There are no Playoff or Championship games for this age group.

STOPPAGE OF PLAY

1. Only the acting umpire may call a play dead.
2. A play will be stopped if any of the following occur:
	1. On an overthrow at first base or third base. Once the ball crosses into foul territory, the play is ended and runners may not advance further.
	2. The ball breaks the plane of the circle surrounding the pitcher’s mound. You cannot just throw the ball thru the circle to stop play, there must be some intent to throw to the pitcher however, the ball needs not to be secured.
	3. The ball is in control of the pitcher and any part of her body is within the circle.
	4. The ball is in control of an infielder and the lead runner has stopped forward progress.
3. A ball thrown to 2nd base from any position on the field results in an overthrow, base runners can advance one base. However, this is not a free base and play is still live.

BASE RUNNING RULES

1. Once the play is dead, runners not more than halfway to the next base must return to the previous base touched.
2. A lead off line will be placed 4ft from inside base. Players are not permitted to cross this line for lead offs. Coaches are to instruct players to lead off when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. *If this rule is violated, whole team gets one warning. Continued crossing of line by any player on that team will result in an out of that player.*

BATTING RULES

1. A batter receives a maximum of 7 pitches or 3 swinging strikes.If the 7th pitch is fouled or subsequent balls are fouled, the batter stays alive until the ball is hit fair or a strikeout occurs. No walks, no hit by pitch.
2. All players present must be placed in the batting order.

COACH PITCHING RULES

1. The adult pitcher uses only 1 ball.
2. If a hit ball strikes the coach-pitcher the ball is called dead, base runners return to their previous base, and the batter returns to bat. The pitch will be a “no pitch”.

COACHING RULES

1. It is up to the coaches in practice to teach the kids how to do this correctly.
2. During a game, when the ball is not in play, it is permissible for coaches of both teams to instruct players on what to do in the upcoming situation.
3. Coaches are also encouraged to correct players on any mistakes made the previous play.
4. Coaches need to work together on the field so that the atmosphere of the game is teaching the girls how to play the game while also letting them have fun.

***SUPPLEMENT LEAGUE RULES FOR 6U***

GAME RULES

1. Games will be fun and instructional.
2. No score is kept.
3. Use of an 11-inch softball soft indoor ball (example Incrediball).
4. Games are 3 full innings, around an hour long.
5. There are no Playoff or Championship games for this age group.

BASE RUNNING RULES

1. One base per hit regardless of where the ball goes.
2. Last batter in the lineup will clear the bases to end the inning.

BATTING RULES

1. Each player on the team bats each inning. Batting order can and should be changed for each inning.
2. Players can hit off a coach pitching or a tee. If using a coach pitcher, a tee should be used if no hits within 6 pitches.
3. No outs are recorded, the inning will end after all players have batted.
4. Helmets must be worn at all times when batting or running bases. Strongly recommended that face masks are on the helmets.

FIELDING RULES

1. All players play the field each inning.
2. Players are encouraged to make a play, but no outs are recorded.
3. If using a coach pitcher, there should also be a coach catcher.
4. Strongly recommended that fielding masks be worn.
5. If fielding a catcher, the catcher must wear a catcher’s helmet and chest protector. Shin guards are also strongly recommended.

COACHING RULES

1. It is up to the coaches in practice to teach the kids how to do this correctly.
2. During a game, when the ball is not in play, it is permissible for coaches of both teams to instruct players on what to do in the upcoming situation.
3. Coaches are also encouraged to correct players on any mistakes made the previous play.
4. Coaches need to work together on the field so that the atmosphere of the game is teaching the girls how to play the game while also letting them have fun.

***BCFPL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES***

PLAYOFFS

1. All regular season rules apply for each division. Superseding rules stated below.
2. The numbers of teams that participate in the playoffs will be determined at the BCFPL Board prior to our scheduling meeting.
3. Championship brackets will be created and approved by the BCFPL Board. These brackets will be posted on the BCFPL website prior to the start of the regular season.
4. Playoff seeding will be based on this order: Wins, Head to Head, Runs Against, Coin Toss
5. Higher seeded teams will be the home team throughout the playoffs.
6. There are no ties, so the USA Softball International Tie Breaker rule will continue in extra innings or after time expires until a winner is declared.
7. Each team is to bring one ball to all rounds of playoffs.
8. One umpire at each game will be split by the two teams, just like regular season games.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1. All regular season rules apply for each division. Superseding rules stated below.
2. A coin flip will determine the home team during the championship game.
3. Championship games time limits will increase to 2 hours, innings will remain the same.
4. Balls will be provided by the BCFPL Board.
5. Two umpires will be provided by the BCFPL Board

***BEAVER COUNTY FUTURE STARS***

GENERAL RULES

1. To be used in replacement of the All-Star Games.
2. Future Star nominations will be provided by each District.
3. Selection structure is still TBD.
4. Future Stars will be announced prior to the Championship Games.

***BEAVER COUNTY FASTPITCH LEAGUE - CONSTITUTION***

PREAMBLE

The purpose of the league is to promote fast-pitch softball for girls 17 years old and under in Western Pennsylvania

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of the league shall be the Beaver County Fastpitch League (BCFPL)

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to any athletic association within Beaver County or surrounding areas.

ARTICLE III – OFFICERS/ VOTING MEMBERS

The officers of the league are;

* 1 Commissioner, 1 Assistant Commissioner
* They do not get a vote unless a tiebreaker is necessary.

Voting Members

* District Representatives/Commissioners.
* One vote per district.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

Meeting dates are to be established by agreement at the Seasons Initial start meeting. The initial Seasons meeting will be announced by one of the League Commissioners. Meetings will be conducted in a timely, ordered fashion. Participation and discussion is expected by all members. A majority of members must be present for a formal meeting.

ARTICLE V – AMENDMENT

These articles or any section thereof, may be amended or repealed by a 2/3 vote of the members. However, a fourteen- (14) day verbal of written notice of proposed changes must be provided to each member before action

may be taken.

***BEAVER COUNTY FASTPITCH LEAGUE - BY LAWS***

1. Each District will have one vote with a majority vote needed for any decisions.
2. All teams must pay league fees by deadline determined by vote of the league members.
3. Fees are to be determined on a yearly basis. League fee is nonrefundable.

1. All teams must turn in rosters by the deadline determined each year.

1. Officers duties include:
2. Commissioners: shall preside over the league meeting, set the agenda, and handle other league affairs as directed by the general membership.
3. Assistant Commissioner/Secretary: shall record the minutes of the meeting, handle league correspondence and notify members of meetings and events.

1. Any protest will follow protest procedures as handled in USA SOFTBALL Rule Book.
2. It will be the responsibility of each District to ensure the compliance of all Coaching/Volunteer requirements for their organizations.
3. These by-laws may be amended by majority vote of the membership.
4. Any Police official (township or state) called to a BCFPL game/practice for issues related to a coach or assistant coach; subsequently it is means for dismissal from the BCFPL indefinite for that coach and / or assistant.
5. Only one association will be present in each school district. There will be not adaptations to this rule unless majority vote by all membership.

 ***BEAVER COUNTY FASTPITCH LEAGUE - AMENDMENTS***

Approved January 22, 2018 - Nicole Jordan

* Initial rules for new league.

Format Updated March 23, 2018 - Bill Littler

* Add headers to help locate specific rules during play.

Update March 26, 2019 - Bill Littler

* Add 6U division which increases our division offering to 6.
* Replace 14U with MS and replace 16U with HS.
* Add sub categories under General Game rules.
* Add warmup limitations in between innings to speed up the game.
* Add recommendation to use courtesy runners for catchers.
* Add process to submit umpire feedback, both negative and positive.
* Remove umpire’s option to ump game behind pitchers mound at 10U.
* Add 10U pitchers can pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game.
* Add section for 6U rules, rules still TBD.

Update April 21, 2020 - Bill Littler

* Update rules on how to handle call-up players
* HS and MS divisions will be renamed to Varsity and Junior Varsity
* Varsity and Junior Varsity player eligibility guidance
* Implement 6U division rules
* All-Star Games will no longer be a game, but an announcement of top players called Future Stars

Update March 30, 2021 - Bill Littler

* Change the max/mercy rule to allow for additional innings of play.
* Drop max runs per inning from 6 to 5 for both 10U and 12U.
* Added “at least” to clarify 2 or more can pitch in the first 4 innings.
* Update language to allow additional innings in the event of extended play (extra innings).

Update April 4, 2021 - Bill Littler

* Made an amendment to include players who request to play with other districts. All players must be registered with their home districts to be eligible to request to play with another district. All final decisions will be voted on by the board.

Update March 16, 2022 - Bill Littler

* Coaches are to meet prior to the beginning of 8U games to agree on rules.
* Drop max runs per inning from 6 to 5 for 8U.
* Clarify that the 8U base runners cannot advance when infielders have possession of the ball.
* Runners can advance one base on an overthrow, but only 1 base and the play is dead of the advancement.
* Game cancellation and rescheduling section added

Update March 28, 2023 - Bill Littler

* Sportsmanship & Ejections section added
* Stoppage of Play section added for 8U with the intent of making the 8U division more competitive than the 6U division. Prior to this change, there was very little difference between 6U and 8U divisions.